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U.S. Farm security administration
THE SOUTHERN NEGRO ON THE FARM

HIS PROBLEMS AND WHAT THE FSA IS DOING ABOUT THEM

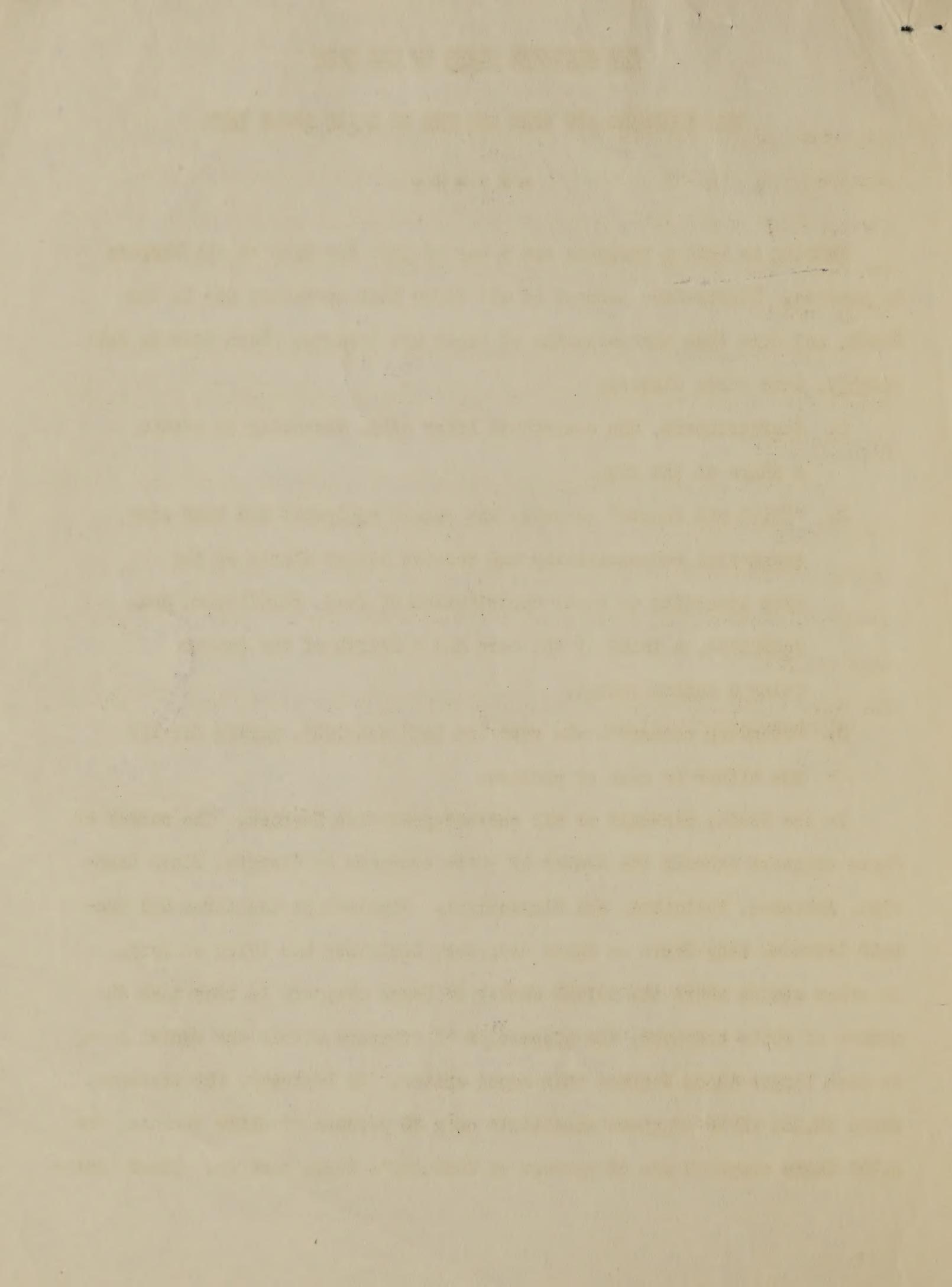
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Farming is both a business and a way of life for half of all Negroes in America. Ninety-five percent of all Negro farm operators are in the South, and more than three-fourths of these are tenants. Farm tenants fall, roughly, into three classes:

1. Sharecroppers, who contribute labor only, receiving in return a share of the crop.
2. "Third and fourth" tenants, who supply equipment and bear some managerial responsibility and receive larger shares of the crop according to their contribution of feed, fertilizer, and equipment, a third of the corn and a fourth of the cotton being a common rental.
3. "Standing renters", who rent the land outright, paying for its use either in cash or produce.

In the South, one-half of all sharecroppers are Negroes. The number of Negro croppers exceeds the number of white croppers in Georgia, South Carolina, Arkansas, Louisiana, and Mississippi. Mississippi has three and one-half times as many Negro as white croppers; Louisiana has twice as many. In other states where the actual number of Negro croppers is less than the number of white croppers, the proportion of croppers within the racial group is much larger among Negroes than among whites. In Kentucky, for instance, where 30,258 white croppers constitute only 30 percent of white tenants, the 2,736 Negro croppers are 65 percent of Kentucky's Negro tenants. Other states

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show even higher proportions. Mississippi's Negro tenants are 71 percent sharecroppers, and 82 percent of all Georgia's Negro tenants are in this class. Half of all Negro children growing to manhood and womanhood on Southern farms face the drudgery and neglect typical of most croppers' children of any race.

Chief among the evils which the poor man on the farm -- small owner, tenant or laborer -- has to face are poor housing, high mortality, insecurity and debt.

Bad housing and sanitation are reflected in hookworm and anemia. Faulty diets result in pellagra. The yearly toll from death and disease adds to the burden of indebtedness, while beneath all these hurtful conditions lies the menace of insecurity, crippling both landlord and tenant in any effort toward progress.

I. WHAT IS THE FARM SECURITY ADMINISTRATION AND WHAT IS IT DOING TO CORRECT SUCH CONDITIONS WHERE THEY EXIST?

A. What It Is:

1. It is an agency of the United States Department of Agriculture, set up to help needy farm families which are unable to get help elsewhere.

B. What It Does:

1. It makes rehabilitation loans, at 5 percent interest, for periods of one to five years. With such a loan, the farmer buys the things he needs to make a living from the land -- wagons, mules, milk cows, seed, fertilizer, etc. Usually included in the loan

are reserve funds sufficient to provide the family with food and clothing through a crop year. Farmers obtaining these loans co-operate with Farm Security Administration farm and home management supervisors in making and carrying out plans for each year's operations.

- a. Every farm plan calls for the production at home of enough food to supply the farm family with a properly balanced diet, thus preventing dietary diseases and improving general health.
- b. The farm plan also calls for the production at home of ample feed for the livestock, increasing the value of the stock and conserving cash.
- c. The plan calls for the conservation of the soil by sound farm practices, such as crop rotation, planting of cover crops, and erosion control.

Through rehabilitation loans, families are learning to keep their books, make their budgets, and live within them. Approximately 50,000 such loans, representing 12.5 percent of the total, have been made to Negro farmers in the last four years. Negro farmers are 12.6 percent of America's farm operators.

2. It enables selected renters, sharecroppers or farm laborers with energy, ambition and a good record to become established as owners on desirable land through long-time loans in larger amounts, repayable over a period of 40 years. Cooperative supervision is a part of all loan agreements. During the first year of operation of the Bankhead-Jones Farm Tenant Act --- 1937-38 ---

265 loans were made to Negro tenants, constituting 18.6 percent of the total for Regions IV, V, VI and VIII where Negroes on farms are found in appreciable numbers. Negro tenancy in this area is 34.1. Applications for 1937-38 were 19.3 percent of the total and for this year were 26.4.

a. In actual figures there were five times as many Negro applications this year as last year -- 26,989 as compared with 5,089. Figures for whites rose proportionately.

3. It is trying to develop better social and economic patterns in agriculture by establishing homestead projects. Some of them are new communities, while others consist of scattered individual farms. More than 1,000 Negro families were living on such projects in January, 1939.

a. Farmsteads on these projects are provided with houses, barns, and out buildings. Representatives of the Farm Security Administration guide these homesteaders in their farm work, exactly as they help FSA rehabilitation borrowers.

b. In addition to this assistance, project farmers learn to farm cooperatively. Cooperative stores, gins and marketing services are acquainting them with the benefits of cooperatives.

c. Negro farmers, together with others, are profiting by this experience. They are established on 31 projects in 13 Southeastern States.

4. FSA also is setting up rental cooperatives, through which groups of tenants can improve their tenureship and living conditions by leasing large tracts of land through FSA loans, and operating them cooperatively, usually with an option to buy within a given period.
 - a. Thirty such rental cooperatives are being set up for operation in the Mississippi Delta area. Color ratio on these projects is determined by the need in the area.
 - b. Projects on which Negro youths can secure "internships" in modern farm practices are pointing the way for the coming generation.
 - c. By encouraging long-term written leases, FSA is trying to cure some of the worst evils of tenancy. Such leases benefit both owner and tenant, since they encourage better housing and better land use.
5. FSA supplies, without cost, a debt adjustment service which is available to all farmers. Volunteer local committees have arranged debt adjustments which have saved American farmers \$78,807,693 in the last four years. There is no racial breakdown on these figures, but case histories on file at Farm Security Administration offices show that Negro farmers especially are benefiting by this service.

6. It offers loans to small groups of farmers unable to purchase livestock, heavy farm equipment and other needed services individually, enabling them to purchase these for community use. Negroes are making increasing use of these community services.
7. It is releasing land to its proper use by limiting loans to farmers established on land suitable for cultivation, and by assisting in the relocation of farmers situated on sub-marginal or cut-over lands.
 - a. It is restoring land to cultivation through erosion control by its clients, and by instructing and directing its borrowers in soil-building practices.
8. It is shaping patterns in rural education, by providing adequate school buildings and equipment on many projects. State and County school authorities cooperate in supplying competent staffs to teach subjects carefully correlated with rural life. Negro tenants particularly are welcoming this educational guidance.
9. It is supplying medical aid through the establishment of group medical care associations, through which clients receive service of physicians and nurses at minimum rates, supplanting fear, neglect and superstition with skilled assistance.

III. HOW IS THIS PARTNERSHIP BETWEEN THE FSA AND THE FARMER DIRECTED?

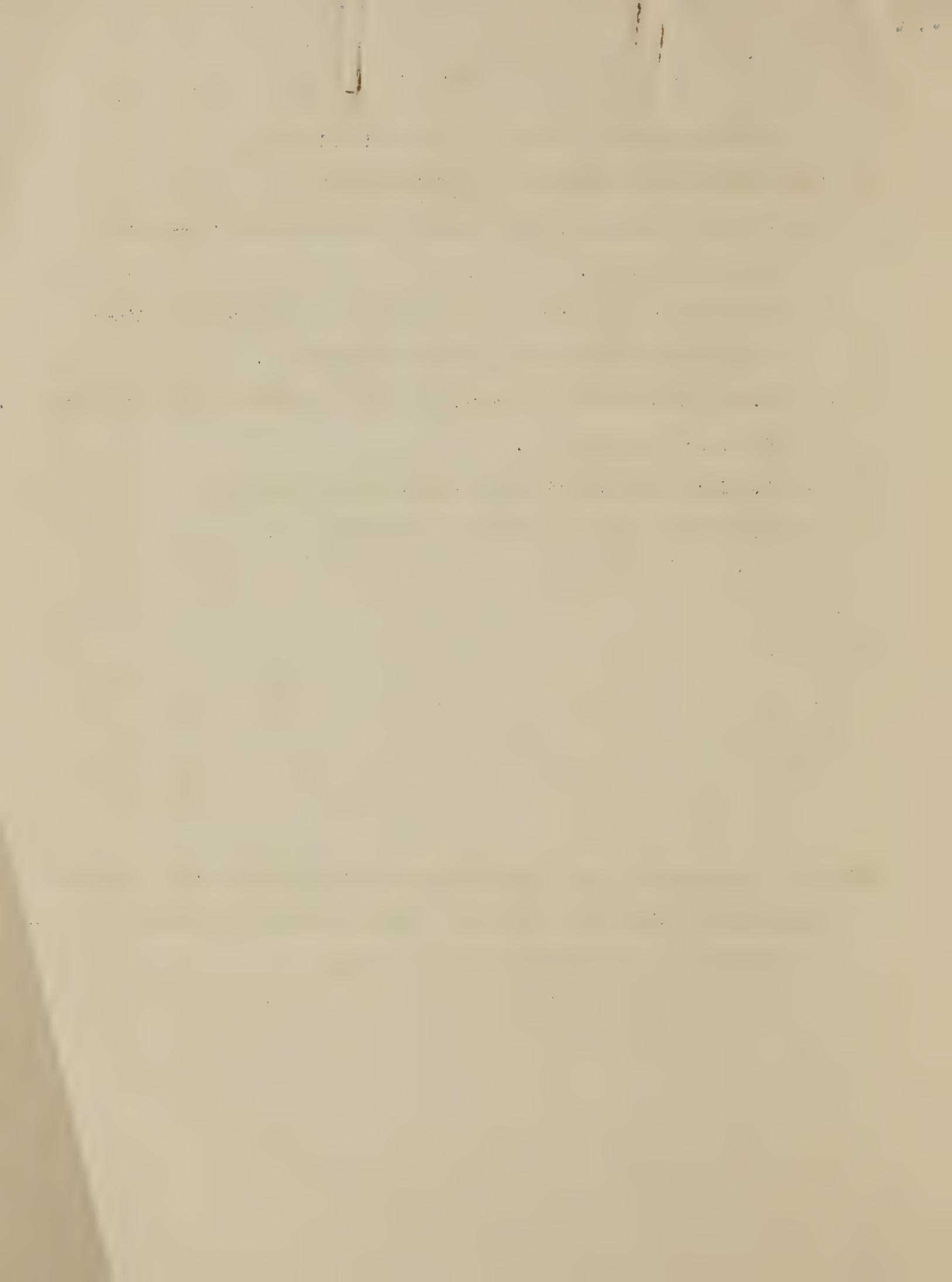
- A. By close cooperation between FSA supervisors and borrowers, planning together for the development of each farm unit affected: the cash crop, garden produce, canning, farm procedure, and setting up of

farm bookkeeping, including budget and inventory.

IV. WHAT HAVE BEEN THE RESULTS OF THIS PARTNERSHIP?

- A. Increased self-respect as evidenced by repayments -- often made ahead of time.
- B. Increases in net worth in terms of increased canning, livestock and equipment and improved diet and housing.
- C. General improvement in tenureship and in owner-tenant relationships.
- D. Increased ownership.
- E. Increased knowledge of modern agricultural methods.
- F. Improvement in health and living standards.

NOTE: The attached table shows the distribution among tenure groups of Negroes and whites in the fourteen Southern States, Maryland and Missouri -- the status of the Southern Negro on the farm.



COMPARATIVE FIGURES ON DISTRIBUTION OF FARM TENURESHIP

AMONG NEGROES AND WHITES IN SOUTH

Key: Upper figures white; lower figures Negro

STATE	FARM POPULATION (Individuals on Farms)	OWNERS		OPERATORS		TENANTS		CROPPERS	
		%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Maryland	241,596 <u>41,861</u> 283,457	35.2 <u>14.7</u> 100	28,793 <u>2,728</u> 31,526	91.3 <u>8.6</u> 100	39,595 <u>4,906</u> 44,501	88.9 <u>11.0</u> 100	9,976 <u>2,135</u> 12,111	82.3 <u>17.6</u> 100	1,061 <u>600</u> 1,661
Missouri	1,183,499 <u>28,855</u> 1,212,354	97.6 <u>2.3</u> 100							
Kentucky	1,307,816 <u>43,313</u> 1,351,129	96.7 <u>3.2</u> 100	170,609 <u>4,052</u> 174,661	97.6 <u>2.3</u> 100	270,048 <u>8,250</u> 278,298	97.0 <u>2.9</u> 100	99,028 <u>4,187</u> 103,215	95.9 <u>4.0</u> 100	30,258 <u>2,756</u> 33,014
N. Carolina	1,623,481 <u>460,936</u> 2,084,467	77.8 <u>22.1</u> 100	137,738 <u>20,272</u> 153,111	87.1 <u>12.8</u> 100	231,594 <u>69,372</u> 300,967	76.9 <u>23.0</u> 100	92,173 <u>48,985</u> 142,158	65.5 <u>34.4</u> 100	36,392 <u>30,001</u> 66,393
Tennessee	1,503,420 <u>169,917</u> 1,478,337	88.5 <u>11.4</u> 100	138,853 <u>7,843</u> 146,696	94.6 <u>5.2</u> 100	239,337 <u>24,296</u> 273,733	87.4 <u>12.5</u> 100	100,062 <u>26,545</u> 126,507	78.9 <u>20.9</u> 100	25,351 <u>16,096</u> 51,477
Virginia	1,053,469 <u>269,009</u> 1,322,478	79.6 <u>20.3</u> 100	110,477 <u>27,662</u> 138,139	79.9 <u>20.0</u> 100	154,421 <u>43,211</u> 197,632	78.1 <u>21.8</u> 100	42,874 <u>15,512</u> 58,336	73.4 <u>26.5</u> 100	12,137 <u>6,102</u> 18,239
W. Virginia	561,919 <u>4,255</u> 566,174	99.2 <u>.7</u> 100	76,622 <u>511</u> 77,133	99.3 <u>6</u> 100	104,054 <u>693</u> 104,747	99.3 <u>6</u> 100	26,846 <u>175</u> 27,021	99.3 <u>.6</u> 100	3,032 <u>11</u> 3,043

STATE	FARM POPULATION (Individuals on Farms)	OWNERS			OPERATORS			TENANTS			CROPPERS		
		%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Alabama	1,138,074 <u>490,706</u> 1,628,780	69.8 <u>15.709</u> 96,692	80,983 <u>15.709</u> 96,692	83.7 <u>16.2</u> 100	182,180 <u>91.275</u> 273,455	66.6 <u>33.2</u> 100	100,705 <u>75.542</u> 176,247	57.1 <u>42.8</u> 100	34,717 <u>33.257</u> 67,974	51.0 <u>48.9</u> 100			
Florida	319,658 <u>85,579</u> 405,237	78.8 <u>13.7</u> 100	42,627 <u>6.792</u> 49,419	86.2 <u>13.7</u> 100	60,093 <u>12.764</u> 72,357	82.4 <u>17.5</u> 100	14,777 <u>5.922</u> 20,699	71.3 <u>23.6</u> 100	3,153 <u>1.521</u> 4,674	67.4 <u>32.5</u> 100			
Georgia	1,405,944 <u>525,612</u> 1,931,557	72.7 <u>27.2</u> 100	74,626 <u>10.571</u> 85,197	87.5 <u>12.4</u> 100	177,259 <u>73.285</u> 250,544	70.7 <u>22.2</u> 100	101,649 <u>62.682</u> 164,331	61.8 <u>22.1</u> 100	41,672 <u>51.404</u> 93,076	44.7 <u>55.2</u> 100			
S. Carolina	948,435 <u>510,031</u> 1,458,466	65.0 <u>34.9</u> 100	43,548 <u>18.394</u> 61,942	70.3 <u>29.6</u> 100	88,967 <u>76.537</u> 165,504	53.7 <u>46.2</u> 100	44,802 <u>58.124</u> 102,926	43.5 <u>56.4</u> 100	16,001 <u>21.046</u> 47,047	34.0 <u>65.9</u> 100			
Kansas	1,180,238 <u>321,067</u> 1,501,305	78.6 <u>21.3</u> 100	89,319 <u>11.342</u> 100,662	88.7 <u>11.2</u> 100	181,713 <u>71.300</u> 253,013	71.8 <u>28.1</u> 100	91,819 <u>52.940</u> 151,759	60.5 <u>32.4</u> 100	24,625 <u>40.978</u> 65,603	37.5 <u>62.4</u> 100			
Louisiana	859,351 <u>371,140</u> 1,230,491	69.8 <u>30.1</u> 100	50,481 <u>10.839</u> 61,320	82.3 <u>17.6</u> 100	99,901 <u>70.315</u> 170,216	58.6 <u>41.3</u> 100	48,921 <u>59.456</u> 108,377	45.1 <u>54.8</u> 100	16,706 <u>33.513</u> 50,219	33.2 <u>66.7</u> 100			
Mississippi	1,332,931 <u>719,114</u> 2,052,095	64.9 <u>35.0</u> 100	71,936 <u>21.288</u> 93,224	77.1 <u>22.8</u> 100	142,677 <u>169,006</u> 311,683	45.7 <u>54.2</u> 100	69,871 <u>147,692</u> 217,564	32.1 <u>67.8</u> 100	30,757 <u>106,156</u> 136,913	22.4 <u>77.5</u> 100			
Oklahoma	1,015,562 <u>98,636</u> 1,114,198	91.1 <u>8.8</u> 100	75,127 <u>6.762</u> 81,889	91.7 <u>8.2</u> 100	195,501 <u>17.824</u> 213,325	91.6 <u>8.3</u> 100	119,615 <u>11,046</u> 130,661	91.5 <u>8.4</u> 100	10,959 <u>2,681</u> 13,650	80.2 <u>19.6</u> 100			
Texas	2,332,693 <u>387,936</u> 2,720,679	85.7 <u>14.2</u> 100	190,640 <u>20.800</u> 211,440	90.1 <u>9.8</u> 100	429,232 <u>71.785</u> 501,017	85.6 <u>14.3</u> 100	235,182 <u>50.941</u> 286,103	82.1 <u>17.8</u> 100	13,650 <u>25,675</u> 76,468	66.4 <u>33.5</u> 100			

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